



Humanitarian Law Center

Annex

Ljubisa Dikovic's File

This Annex contains excerpts from a number of publicly available documents of the Yugoslav Army (hereafter VJ), which further confirm the HLC's allegations set out in the Ljubisa Dikovic File, published on January 23, 2012, regarding the presence of the VJ's 37th Motorized Brigade (hereafter "37th mtbr.") in the Drenica region of Kosovo, where mass killings of Kosovo Albanian civilians and other serious violations of international humanitarian law were committed.

Included in the Annex is the Regular Combat Report of the 37th mtbr. about the unit's presence in tt.692 on March 27, 1999, a territory identified by the survivors as the field of Vragodol/Vrogodoll, where the soldiers shot 22 Kosovo Albanian men, four of whom survived.

In addition, the Annex contains reports, signed by the commander of the 37th mtbr. about establishing control over Kosovo Albanian civilians in the villages in the municipality of Glogovac/Glllogoc and Srbica/Skënderaj, and in the towns Glogovac/Glllogoc and Srbica/Skënderaj, after several thousand Kosovo Albanians had been driven out of the area, and as many as 250 of them killed, although they had not taken part in hostilities.

The Thunder 98 campaign plan of the VJ's Third Army's command, excerpts of which are also part of this Annex (the text of the campaign plan in its entirety is available on the HLC's website and in the ICTY's public database), shows that as early as July 1999 some combat groups of the 37th mtbr. were assigned very specific tasks to 'break up the DTS and armed insurrection forces in Kosovo and Metohija'.

That Ljubisa Dikovic was not an exemplary officer when it comes to taking care of his own troops – a fact that certainly does not recommend him for the position of the Chief of Staff – is shown by a document of the Prishtina Corps Command, according to which Gen. Vladimir Lazarevic, commander of the Prishtina Corps (subsequently sentenced by the ICTY), following the death of two soldiers of the 37th mtbr in a NATO air strike on April 29, 1999, warned Dikovic that the cause of their death was a lack of discipline and disregard for the orders of 'continuous command'.

The commander of the 37th mtbr. knew (it was his duty to know) that the breaking up of the STF [Shiptar Terrorist Forces] was being carried out by way of shelling, evictions, looting, rape and unlawful killings of Kosovo Albanian civilians. The crimes were repeated, from one village to another, as part of the plan to 'break up and destroy the STF'. After the fall of Slobodan Milosevic, Ljubisa Dikovic should have spoken about these actions and about his relationship with the Joint Command for Kosovo and Metohija. He didn't. Instead, as a witness for the defense of General Lazarevic, in *Prosecutor v. M. Milutinovic et al.* he defended the accused generals and denied any knowledge of the crimes and mass graves in the zone of his command in Kosovo.

1. Ljubisa Dikovic's professional promotion

- 1994: Attained the rank of Major for his actions in defending the Homeland from 'the attacks by Muslim extremists from Skelani, Srebrenica and Bratunac', while serving as commander of the 16th Border Battalion;¹
- 1998: Became Lieutenant Colonel, when the Third Army Command executed the 'Thunder 98' plan;
- 1998: Promoted to the Chief of Staff of the 37th Motorized Brigade;
- 1998, November 3,: Became the Commander of the 37th mtbr;²
- 1999, early March: Receives promotion into Colonel during the state of emergency;³
- 1999, June 16: On behalf of the 37th mtbr. received the National Hero Medal, which was awarded by the decree of the then FRY President Slobodan Milosevic;
- 2005: Attained the rank of Major General of the Army of Serbia;⁴
- 2009: Became Lieutenant-Colonel.⁵

2. Death of two soldiers of the 37th mtbr.

On April 29, 1999, between 15.00 and 16.00 hrs. near the village of Orlate, two members of the 37th mtbr. (Djordje Dunjic and Ljubinko Djordjevic – HLC's identification) were killed in a NATO air strike. On the same day, the commander of Prishtina Corps, Major General Vladimir Lazarevic, sent to the headquarters of the 37th mtbr. an order (marked "Very urgent") concerning the measures that were to be taken in view of the danger posed to the safety of personnel and military units.

"It is my estimate that the ultimate cause of death of the soldiers was lack of discipline within the 37th mtbr. and the failure to execute my orders about maintaining complete control over, and continuous command of, the units."⁶

3. The task of 37th mtbr, as per 'Thunder 98'⁷

A document titled 'Thunder 98', dated July 29, 1998 and signed by the commander of the 3rd Army, Lieutenant General Dusan Samardzic, stipulated the distribution of tasks to be carried out by the units of the Pristina Corps. In the first phase, the entire body of the Prishtina Corps, including the Combat Team 37/37th mtbr-2.A, was to continue to secure the state border with Albania and Macedonia, protect the military units and facilities from DTG actions, enable communication routes for supplying the units, and, in conjunction with Serbia's police forces (MUP) participate in the breaking up and destruction of the STF in that particular zone of command.

4. The task of the 37th mtbr. on March 7, 1999

"In peace-time we did not carry out any actions that involved breaking into villages and cleansings, because the military police were doing that, but now we had to do that, although we were on the move."⁸

¹ Article, *Vojska*, 'Example for All Generations' („Primer generacijama“), pp.9-13, 07/15/1999 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Document Type: Submission, Date: 05/07/2006).

² TV program „Da, možda ne“, statement by Miroslav Lazanski, RTS, 01/26/2012.

³ Article, *Vojska*, 'The Brave Men of Drenica, Heroes of Defense' („Hrabri ljudi Drenice, heroji odbrane“), pp.11-13, 07/15/1999, Captain Slobodan Radenkovic (ICTY, IT-02-54: *Milosevic*, Exhibit P320.106); Article, *Vojska*, „37.mtbr VJ“, pp.11-13, 07/1/1999. (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Document Type: Submission, Date: 05/07/2006).

⁴ The Army of Serbia, official web page: <http://www.vs.rs/index.php?content=8709fe1d-fdf2-102b-9fa8-28e40361dc2e>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ ICTY, Command of the Prishtina Corps, April 29, 1999, Commander, general-major Vladimir Lazarevic; (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit 5D00385).

⁷ ICTY, Order on the breaking up of DTS and insurrection forces in Kosovo and Metohija (Zapovest za razbijanje DTS i snaga oružane pobune na KiM), Command of the Third Army, DT.br.6034-7/1, 08/29/1998 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit 4D00140).

⁸ Article, *Vojska*, 'The Brave Men of Drenica, Heroes of Defense' („Hrabri ljudi Drenice, heroji odbrane“), pp.11-13, 07/15/1999, Captain Slobodan Radenkovic (ICTY, IT-02-54: *Milosevic*, Exhibit P320.106).

5. Involvement of the 37th mtbr. in Operation *Drenica*

On March 22, 1999, the Joint Command for Kosovo and Metohija, issued an order on the destruction of 'STF' in the region of Donja Drenica. The VJ forces which participated in the attack in the municipality of Srbica/Skënderaj were the 37th and the 125th Motorized Brigades. The operation involved seven Special Police Forces (PJP) companies, of which two were in direct communication with the 37th mtbr. The initial command post was in Srbica/Skënderaj, and then in the village of Cikatovo/Çikatovë.⁹

On March 24, 1999, the Joint Command for Kosovo and Metohija issued another order to the VJ units to support the MUP forces in breaking up and destroying the 'STF' in the region of Drenica. It was decided that the attack on the 'STF' should begin at 5:00 pm on March 26, 1999. The 37th mtbr (BG-37 and TG-37) was tasked to support the MUP forces in the area of Rudnik/Runik-Vitak-Kladernica/Klladërnice-Voçnjak/Vojnikë-Broçna/Burojë. The commander of the 37th mtbr. complied with this order, and transferred his command post to the village of Rudnik/Runik.¹⁰

5.1. Actions of the 37th mtbr's Combat Team between Izbica/Izbiçë and Kladernica/Kllodernicë

The village of Rudnik/Runik was attacked on March 25, 1999. The residents fled the village and took refuge in nearby Kladernica/Klladërnice. The next day, March 26, there was firing from the hill above the village. The villagers and refugees who had sought shelter in the village, left the houses and fled into the nearby woods. Before entering the forest, they left their tractors by a creek. About 500 men, women and children found refuge in a field which was surrounded by trees. They spent the night there. In the morning on March 27, they heard gunshots. Around 11:00 am soldiers surrounded them and shouted in Serbian – “Surrender!” Zeqir Mulaj (1939) stood up and explained in Serbian that the people gathered in the field were all civilians. He was shot while giving this explanation. The soldiers then killed his son Arton Mulaj (1982), and then Miradije Mulaj (1973). Then they took 22 men, including Valon who was a minor, and headed toward the mountains. Ten minutes later, a NATO aircraft flew over, which the soldiers took as a pretext to swear at and beat the men in the column for the next three hours. Then they led the men towards Izbica/Izbiçë. On the way, they arrived at the spot near the creek and the forest where the villagers from Rudnik/Runik and Vitak/Vitak had left their tractors. The soldiers burned all the vehicles. In a trailer of one of the tractors lay a paralyzed and mute old man, Osman Mulaj. One of the soldiers approached him and set fire to the trailer. The captured Kosovo Albanians were then taken to the Vragodol/Vrogodoll field.¹¹

5.2. Bvy 15.00 hrs. on March 27, 1999, the units of the 37th mtbr. arrived at the line tt.628 - tt.715-706-692. “tt” is a designation for the field Vragodol/Vrogodoll, between Izbica/ Izbiçë and Kladernica/Kllodernicë.¹²

The soldiers led the detained Albanians to a field where a tank and an armoured vehicle were parked, with many soldiers around them. The soldiers lined up the detainees in front of the tank, and fired a barrage, killing these men: Rrustem (1932), Islam (1945), Rrahman (1943), Megjit (1972), Nuhi (1984) and Rifat (1949) Miftari; Idriz Sejdiu (1942); Mustafë Hyseni (1946); Murat Topalli (1931); Ahmet (1956), Rexhep (1964), Nazmi (1975), and Xhevdet (1967) Osmani; Ramadan Bekaj (1934), Bajram (1932) and Kadri Hasanaj (1940); Bashkim Imeraj (1976); and Hysni Musa (1963).¹³ Four men survived the barrage: Valon, 13 years old, whom the residents of Kladernica/Kllodërnice and

⁹ ICTY, Joint Command of Kosovo and Metohija, Order on the breaking up of DTS and insurrection forces in the region of Donja Drenica (Zajednička komanda za KiM, Odluka za razbijanje i uništenje ŠTS u rejonu Donja Drenica), 03/22/1999 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit P02031).

¹⁰ ICTY, Joint Command of Kosovo and Metohija, Order on the support to MUP forces in breaking up and destruction of STF in the region of Donja Drenica (Zajednička komanda za KiM, Zapovest za podršku snaga MUP-a u razbijanju i uništenju ŠTS u rejonu Drenica) 03/24/1999 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit P01968).

¹¹ HLC database, Statement: A.M, FHP-15960.

¹² ICTY, Command of the 37th mtbr. 03/27/1999, Regular Comabt Report (Redovni borbeni izveštaj) (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit P02045).

¹³ HLC database, Statement: I.M, FHP-20326.

Rudnik/Runik found wounded two days later among the bodies; Driton Mulaj and Ahmet and Isa Miftari.

6. The Case *Prosecutor v. M. Milutinovic et al.*

Prosecutor Carter – Question for witness Dikovic: So even though your unit was directly involved in this area [Operation *Drenica*], nobody from the VJ called you to account for any of these operations or to provide any information about the discovered mass graves?

Witness Dikovic – Reply: No. Believe me, I don't know what mass graves you are talking about. Let me repeat, I didn't see any mass graves in my area.¹⁴

7. Participation of the 37th mtbr. in Operation *Kamenica*

On April 30, 1999, between 06.00 and 18.00 hrs. between the Cicavica mountain and the Srbica/Skënderaj-Glogovac/Gllogoc road, where the villages of Baks, Vrbovac/Vërboc, Dosevac/Dashec, Stutica/Shtuticë, Staro Cikatovo/e Čikato Vjetër, Cirez/Qirez are located, an operation designed to break up and destroy the 'STF' was carried out. According to a report on the implementation of this operation, signed by the commander of 37th mtbr. Colonel Ljubisa Dikovic, 148 members of the 'STF' were killed and 172 persons detained.¹⁵

However, data collected by the HLC, shows that on April 30, 1999, in the municipalities of Glogovac/Gllogoc and Srbica/Skënderaj, VJ/MUP forces killed as many as 150 Kosovo Albanian civilians, who had taken no part in the hostilities in the villages of Vrbovac/Vërboc, Dosevac/Dashec, Stutica/Shtuticë, Staro Cikatovo/e Čikato Vjetër and Baks [Cf. Section 4 and 5 of the Ljubisa Dikovic File].¹⁶

8. Establishing control in the municipalities of Glogovac/Gllogoc and Srbica/Skënderaj

On May 4, 1999, the commander of the 37th mtbr. Ljubisa Dikovic informed the commander of the Pristina Corps that the Kosovo (Albanian) civilian population had been brought under control and registered. Dikovic reported that there were 4,981 civilians in Srbica/Skënderaj, “of whom 380 were of military age and who had been physically separated and secured in an elementary school.” In the same report, the commander of the 37th mtbr. states that 291 civilians were left in the village of Globare/Gllobar; 230 in Cirez/Qirez, 150 in Stutica/Shtuticë, and about 500 women, children and elderly in the village of Staro Cikatovo/e Čikato Vjetër.¹⁷

According to HLC findings, on May 1, 1999, members of the VJ/MUP took about 130 Kosovo Albanian adults from the mosque in Cirez/Qirez, and transported them to Staro Cikatovo/e Čikato Vjetër, where they shot them in groups.¹⁸

On May 12, 1999, a representative of the Command of the 37th mtbr. was in the village of Staro Cikatovo/e Čikato Vjetër. From the survivors he learned that members of the VJ had killed nine villagers.¹⁹

9. Appointment and responsibility of Ljubisa Dikovic should be reconsidered

¹⁴ ICTY, IT-05-87: *Prosecutor v. Milutinovic et al*, transcript of Ljubisa Dikovic's testimony, 12/11/2007.

¹⁵ ICTY, Command of the 37th mtbr, Commander Ljubisa Dikovic, 05/01/1999, Report on the implementation of the Operation *Kamenica* (Izveštaj o realizaciji akcije „Kamenica“) (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit 5D01036).

¹⁶ HLC database, statements of 82 witnesses given to the HLC in the period 1999-2007.

¹⁷ ICTY, Command of the 37th mtbr. Report, Commander Ljubisa Dikovic, 05/04/1999 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit 5D01080).

¹⁸ HLC database, statements of 68 witnesses given to the HLC over the period 1999-2007.

¹⁹ ICTY, Command of the 37th mtbr. Report on the state of affairs in Glogovac/Gllogoc (Izveštaj o stanju u Glogovcu/Gllogoc), 05/13/1999 (ICTY, IT-05-87: *Milutinovic et al*, Exhibit 5D01086).

The HLC urges the President of the Republic of Serbia to carefully reconsider the military and judicial (ICTY) documents, which cast doubt on Gen. Ljubisa Dikovic's professionalism and reveal his personal and command responsibility. The HLC also urges that his appointment as Chief of the General Staff of the Army of the Republic of Serbia be revoked.

The ICTY documents in original integral form are available at: www.hlc-rdc.org